

In re: Dube *et al.*
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Amendments to the Claims:

Claims 1-26 (Cancelled)

Claims 27-30 (Not Entered)

Claim 31 (New): A method for improving the flavor and aroma characters of a smoking article, comprising:

providing a mixture comprising a reducing sugar and a non-amino base, wherein the reducing sugar is selected from the group consisting of a pure reducing sugar, high fructose corn syrup, a phosphate-substituted reducing sugar, and mixtures thereof;

subjecting said mixture to heat treatment for a time and under conditions sufficient to produce a flavorful caramel composition, wherein said heat treatment is conducted at a temperature of at least about 150°C;

applying said flavorful composition to a tobacco material; and

preparing a smoking article comprising said tobacco material.

Claim 32 (New): The method of Claim 31, wherein said base is a hydroxide.

Claim 33 (New): The method of Claim 32, wherein said hydroxide is an alkali metal hydroxide.

Claim 34 (New): The method of Claim 32, wherein said hydroxide is sodium hydroxide or potassium hydroxide.

Claim 35 (New): The method of Claim 32, wherein said hydroxide is present in an amount of less than about 30 weight percent on a water-free basis.

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Claim 36 (New): The method of Claim 35, wherein said hydroxide is present in an amount of about 0.5 to about 10 weight percent on a water-free basis.

Claim 37 (New): The method of Claim 31, wherein said reducing sugar is a pure reducing sugar selected from the group consisting of glucose, fructose, sucrose, mannose, galactose, rhamnose, and mixtures thereof.

Claim 38 (New): The method of Claim 31, wherein said reducing sugar is a phosphate-substituted reducing sugar selected from the group consisting of glucose-6-phosphate, fructose-6-phosphate, fructose-1,6-diphosphate, and mixtures thereof.

Claim 39 (New): The method of Claim 31, wherein said reducing sugar is high fructose corn syrup.

Claim 40 (New): The method of Claim 31, wherein the heat treatment is conducted at a temperature of at least about 175°C.

Claim 41 (New): The method of Claim 31, wherein the heat treatment is conducted under a pressure of about 20 psig to about 500 psig.

Claim 42 (New): The method of Claim 31, wherein the heat treatment is conducted for a period of at least about 10 minutes.

Claim 43 (New): The method of Claim 31, wherein said flavorful composition is applied at an amount of from about 5% to about 8% by weight based on the total dry weight of the tobacco material in the smoking article.

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Claim 44 (New): The method of Claim 31, wherein said mixture further comprises water.

Claim 45 (New): A smoking article prepared by the method of Claim 31.

Claim 46 (New): A method for improving the flavor and aroma characters of a smoking article, said method comprising:

providing a mixture comprising high fructose corn syrup and a non-amino base; subjecting said mixture to heat treatment for a time and under conditions sufficient to produce a flavorful composition, wherein said heat treatment is conducted at a temperature of at least about 150°C;

applying said flavorful composition directly to a tobacco material; and preparing a smoking article comprising said tobacco material.

Claim 47 (New): The method of Claim 46, wherein said base is a hydroxide.

Claim 48 (New): The method of Claim 47, wherein said hydroxide is an alkali metal hydroxide.

Claim 49 (New): The method of Claim 47, wherein said hydroxide is sodium hydroxide or potassium hydroxide.

Claim 50 (New): The method of Claim 47, wherein said hydroxide is present in an amount of less than about 30 weight percent on a water-free basis.

Claim 51 (New): The method of Claim 50, wherein said hydroxide is present in an amount of about 0.5 to about 10 weight percent on a water-free basis.

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Claim 52 (New): The method of Claim 46, wherein the heat treatment is conducted at a temperature of at least about 175°C.

Claim 53 (New): The method of Claim 46, wherein the heat treatment is conducted under a pressure of about 20 psig to about 500 psig.

Claim 54 (New): The method of Claim 46, wherein the heat treatment is conducted for a period of at least about 10 minutes.

Claim 55 (New): The method of Claim 46, wherein said flavorful composition is applied at an amount of from about 5% to about 8% by weight based on the total dry weight of the tobacco material in the smoking article.

Claim 56 (New): The method of Claim 46, wherein said mixture further comprises water.

Claim 57 (New): A smoking article prepared by the method of Claim 46.

Claim 58 (New): A method for improving the flavor and aroma characters of a smoking article, comprising:

providing an aqueous mixture comprising water, high fructose corn syrup, and a hydroxide;

subjecting said mixture to heat treatment for a time and under conditions sufficient to produce a flavorful caramel composition, wherein said heat treatment is conducted at a temperature of at least about 150°C;

applying said flavorful composition to a tobacco material; and preparing a smoking article comprising said tobacco material.

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